

FRANK FRAZETTA'S
**DEATH
RIDER**



4



IVERSON ◦ MARTINO ◦ DELGADO ◦ BASCLE

STORY
MITCH IVERSON

ART
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with LEONARDO MANCO
and AXEL MEDELLIN

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FRANK FRAZETTA'S DEATH DEALER



THE STORY SO FAR

Kur, the cursed barbarian, is hellbent on saving a woman and her child, much to the chagrin of the evil mind that inhabits Kur's unremovable helm. Despite unleashing Death Dealer and literally collapsing her civilization, he still enlisted the Sorceress to his cause. Because she knows what's truly at stake...

COVER ARTISTS COVER A MARCO TURINI COVER B FRANK FRAZETTA
COVER C VIDEO GAME HOMAGE by DIEGO GALINDO
COVERS D&E DAVID FINCH & RICHARD FRIEND

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SPECIAL THANKS
"Dedicated to the memory of Eric Webb. I hope this was fucked up enough to make you proud."

—Mitch

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THINK
OF IT, KUR.
OUR LONG,
BLOODY QUEST
IS ALMOST
OVER.

AT OUR
MOST DIRE
TIME, WE FIND
THE ULTIMATE
WEAPON.

THE ERA OF OUR CLAN
BEING HUNTED AND
MURDERED BY THE
KAZZAK HORDE
IS OVER.

NOW *WE*
WILL BE THE
ONES SHEDDING
BLOOD--BY THE
RIVERFUL.

BROTHER,
WE HAVE SPILT
SO MANY GUTS INTO
THE DIRT, FOOD FOR
THE MAGGOTS OF THE
LAND. OUR SOULS ARE
DOOMED TO WANDER
THE HELLS FOR
ETERNITY.

WE DO THIS
NOT FOR MORE
VIOLENCE, BUT
SO OUR TRIBE
CAN LIVE.

BEHIND
THIS LIES THE
MOST POWERFUL
WEAPON IN ALL THE
LANDS. YEARS OF
OUR LIFE SPENT
FOR THIS ONE
PURPOSE.



IT'S...A HELMET. I
THOUGHT IT WAS SUPPOSED
TO BE A WEAPON?

A MAGICAL
BARRIER? THE
LEGENDS DIDN'T
SAY ANYTHING
ABOUT THIS...

AN
INSCRIPTION.

IT'S THE
ANCIENT
WORD...

IT SAYS "TO
CROSS THE
SHIELD, YOU MUST
FEED THE BEAST
SOMETHING
YOU LOVE."

WHAT
BEAST?

THERE MUST
BE ANOTHER
WAY.

NO, THIS IS
ANCIENT MAGIC. THE
ONLY WAY ACROSS
IS WITH TRUE
SACRIFICE.

AFTER ALL
THIS TIME.
ALL OUR WORK.
ALL THE LIVES
WE'VE SLAIN
FOR THIS...

YET WE
MUST GO
HOME EMPTY
HANDED.

BUT OUR
PEOPLE!

KUR, I
CANNOT KILL
SOMETHING I
LOVE TO HURT
SOMETHING I
HATE.

YOU'RE
RIGHT.
YOU CAN'T
MAKE THE
SACRIFICE. BUT
FOR US--FOR
OUR CLAN--

WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?!

YOU
BASTARD!

MAY
YOU BE
CURSED
FOR
ETERNITY!

I WILL
SAVE OUR
PEOPLE.
YOUR
DEATH WILL
NOT HAVE
BEEN IN
VAIN!

--I
CAN!



CARRY THE
SHAME OF YOUR
BETRAYAL FOR ALL
TIME! MAY YOUR
LIFE BE HELL!

WHAT THE
HELLS...?

I SAW
WHAT YOU
DID.

WHAT'S
GOING ON?!
WHO ARE
YOU?!

IT'S NOT
WHO I AM.
IT'S WHAT
WE ARE.

I CAN FEEL
YOUR TENDRILS
REACHING
INTO MY MIND.
PAIN. EVIL.



SAY WHAT WE ARE. AND A POWER YOU CANNOT IMAGINE WILL BE UNLEASHED.

I HAVE DONE TERRIBLE THINGS...

...BUT SOMETHING INSIDE MY BONES...

...TELLS ME YOU'RE WORSE THAN ANYTHING I CAN IMAGINE.

YOU'RE RIGHT.

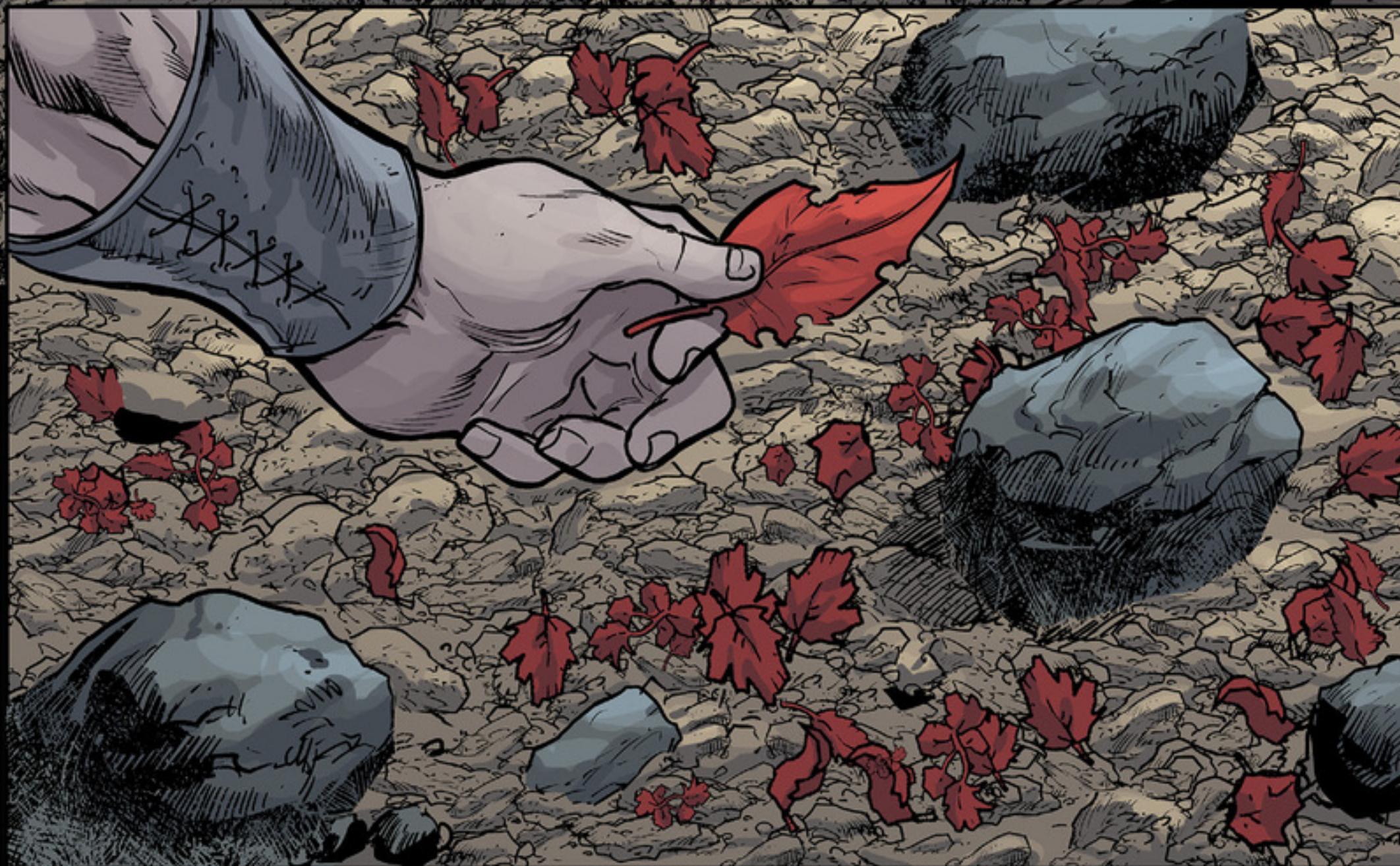
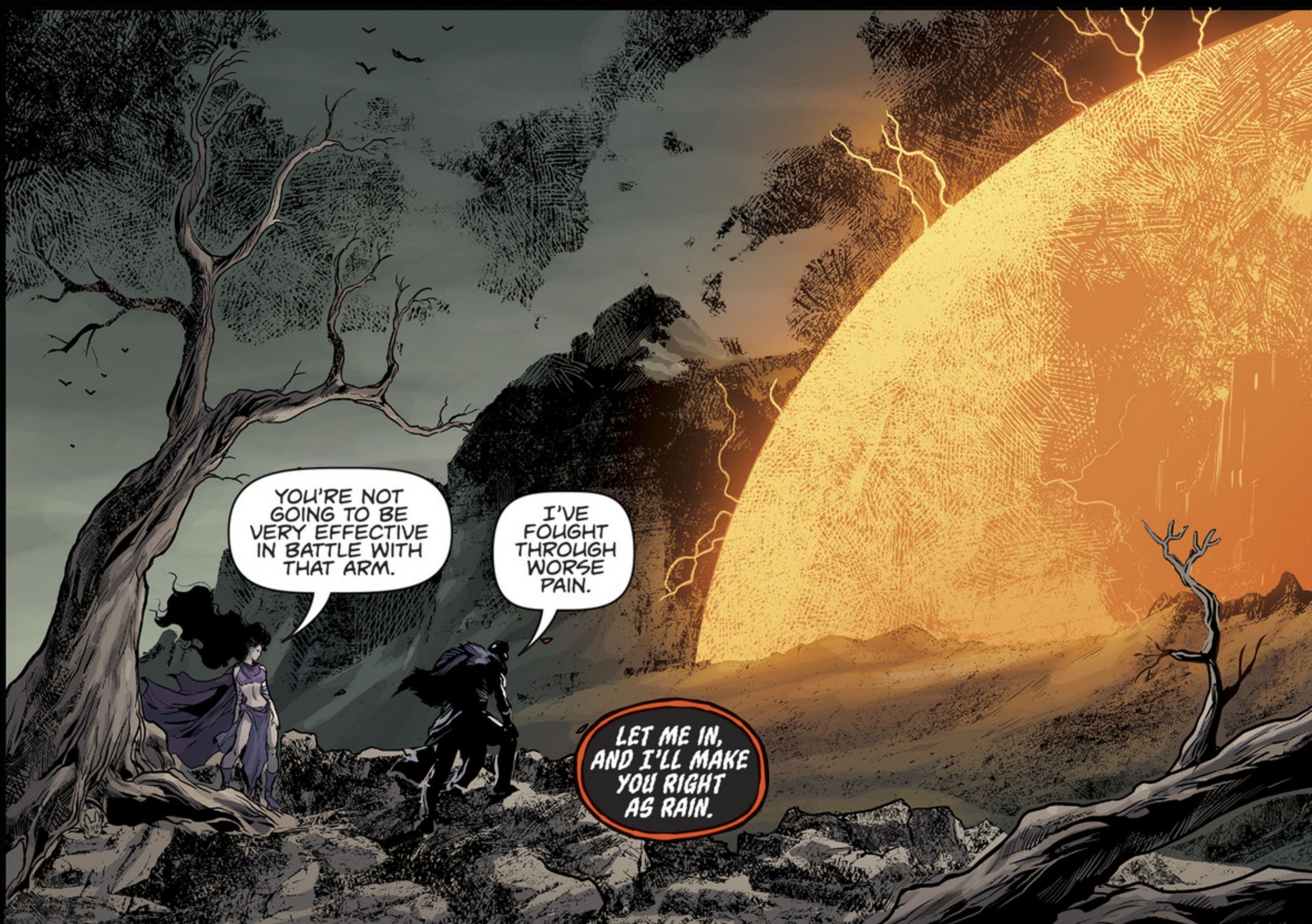
I AM THE INFINITE ABYSS, THE VOID FILLED WITH FEAR.

I AM THE DARKNESS IN THE CAVE.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

SAY OUR NAME. KNOW ANGER. KNOW STRENGTH.

WE ARE **DEATH DEALER!**





YOU KNOW
YOU DON'T
STAND A CHANCE
WITHOUT ME.

I CAN'T
TRUST
YOU.

SADLY,
THE HELM
HAS A
POINT.



I CAN'T LET
THE ANGER IN
AGAIN. IT SWORE
TO ME IT WOULD
KILL YOU THE
FIRST CHANCE
IT GETS.

WHAT, SO
WE'RE NOT
ALLOWED TO JOKE
AROUND ANY-
MORE?



I DON'T WANT
TO DO IT ANY
LONGER. I DON'T
WANT TO BE
ANGRY. I'M...

...I'M
TIRED.

YOUR
ANGER, IS
THERE MORE
BEHIND IT?

WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?



SOMETIMES WE
USE ANGER TO PROTECT
OURSELVES FROM FEELING
SOMETHING ELSE.

MAYBE
SHAME. MAYBE
SADNESS.

IS THERE
A DARKNESS
YOU'RE HIDING
FROM?



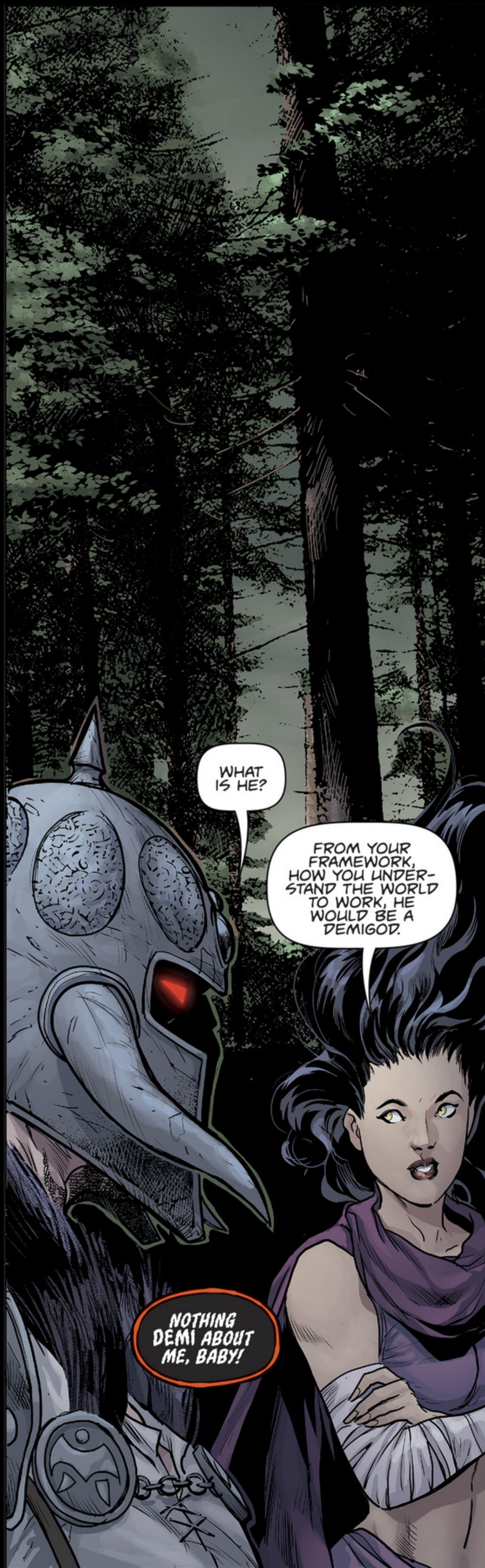
THAT KID IS IN TROUBLE BECAUSE OF WHAT I LET MY ANGER DO.

RESCUING HIM IS THE ONLY THING KEEPING ME GOING. MY ONLY CHANCE FOR REDEMPTION.

FEELINGS ARE A POWERFUL WEAPON. YOU NEED TO LEARN TO USE THEM INSTEAD OF BEING USED BY THEM.

DEATH DEALER WAS ONCE MORE THAN CHAOS INCARNATE.

DON'T FEED HIM YOUR BULLSHIT.



WHAT IS HE?

FROM YOUR FRAMEWORK, HOW YOU UNDERSTAND THE WORLD TO WORK, HE WOULD BE A DEMIGOD.

NOTHING DEMI ABOUT ME, BABY!

BUT HE'S ONLY A SCARED LITTLE BOY THAT MADE BAD CHOICES AND SEEMS UNABLE TO FACE THE PAIN.

AW, FUCK YOU.

A MALIGNANCY HAS FORMED IN HIS MIND AND WITH IT A DISTORTION OF THE COSMOS AROUND US.

THAT'S WHY I TRAPPED HIM IN THE HELM.

WHAT'S THE MORAL I'M SUPPOSED TO GLEAN HERE?

THAT THIS ISN'T A FUCKING FAIRY TALE. HERE, I'VE RETURNED ITS POWER. YOU ONLY NEED SAY HIS NAME TO SUMMON HIM.

MY FRIEND... WHEN YOU TOOK HIM FROM ME, I REALIZED I'D GONE TOO FAR, DONE TOO MUCH WRONG.

MAN, THAT WAS A GREAT DAY.

YOU REALLY ARE THE WORLD'S BIGGEST ASSHOLE.

I SUMMON--



--DOOM!



WHEN WE GET THROUGH, THE ARCHERS ARE GOING TO FIRE FROM THE CRENELATED WALLS. YOU READY?

YES--
WAIT. NO.
WHAT'S CRENELATED?

HA!



JUST BE PREPARED FOR THEM TO SHOOT ARROWS AT YOU FROM ABOVE.

WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY THAT?



I GUESS I'M NOT USED TO DUMBING EVERYTHING DOWN.

IT'S NOT DUMBING IT DOWN; IT'S ONLY SPEAKING PLAINLY.

ISN'T THAT JUST A COMPLICATED WAY OF SAYING DUMBING IT DOWN?



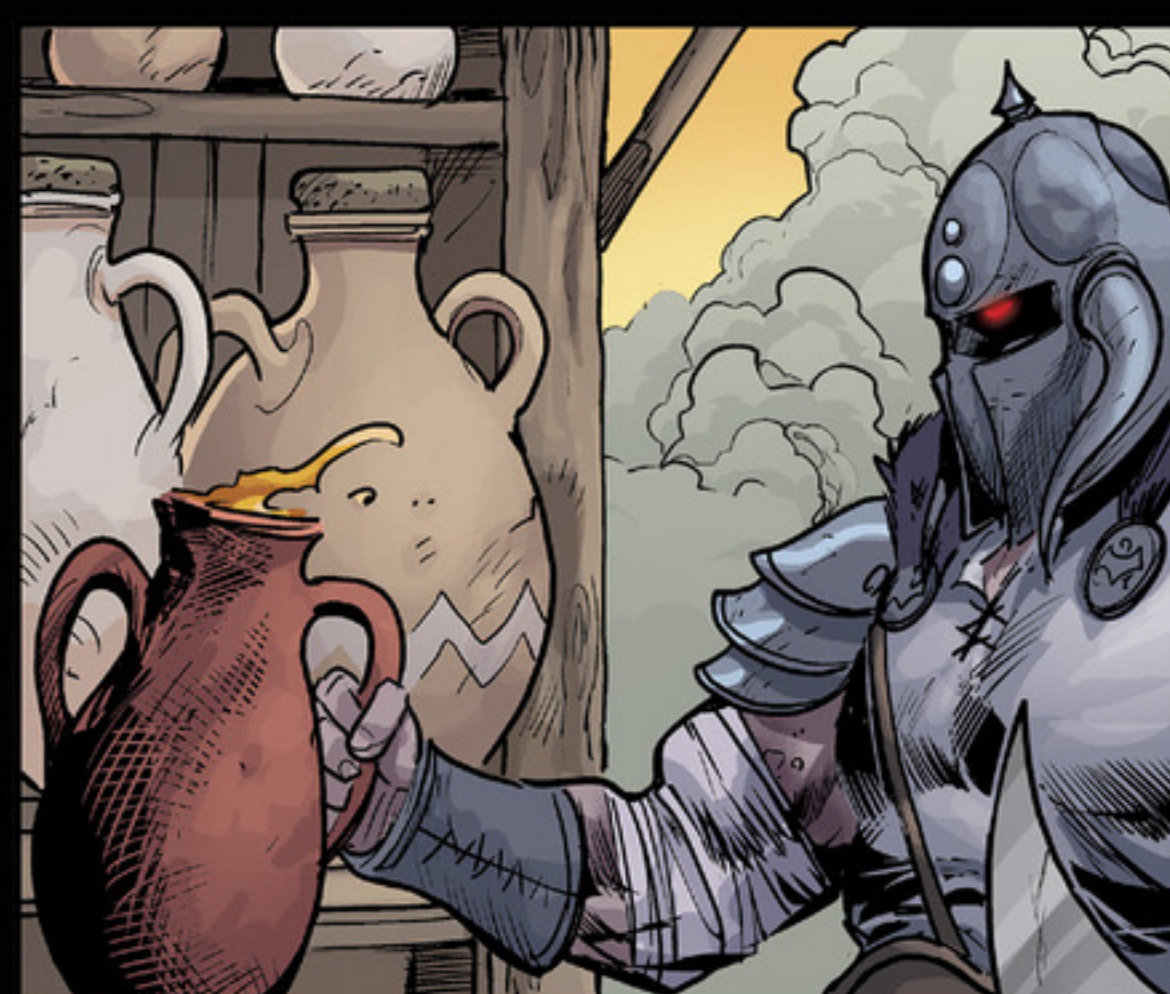
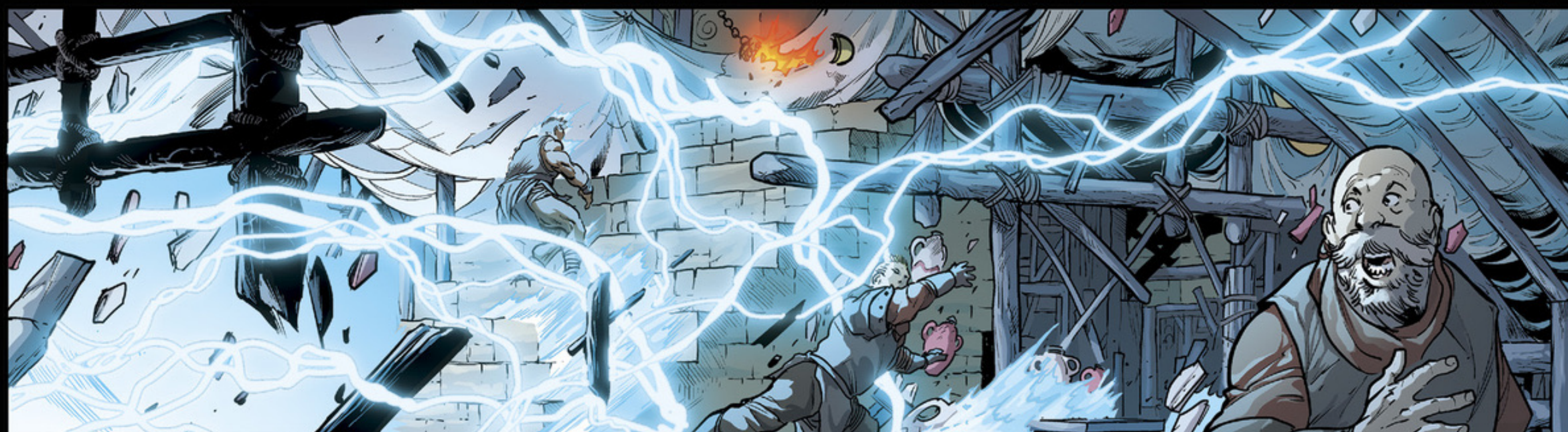
WE ALL AGREE THERE'S A WAY TO SPEAK OSTENTATIOUSLY, CORRECT?!

OH, LET'S JUST START THE GODS DAMNED MISSION.

STARTING BY SAYING THE WORD OSTENTATIOUSLY.

GOOD ONE.







MESH!
ADMIRA, I'M
COMING!



DEATH
DEALER.

TRAITOR.

COME AND
GET HIM.

NO.
ONLY ME.

RELEASE
THE BOY.

HEY, I'M
HERE, TOO.



CAREFUL.



YOU REALLY DON'T
REMEMBER ME, DO YOU?

SHUT
UP!

HE DOESN'T
WANT TO SEE
THE TRUTH.

ENOUGH.



RAARGH!



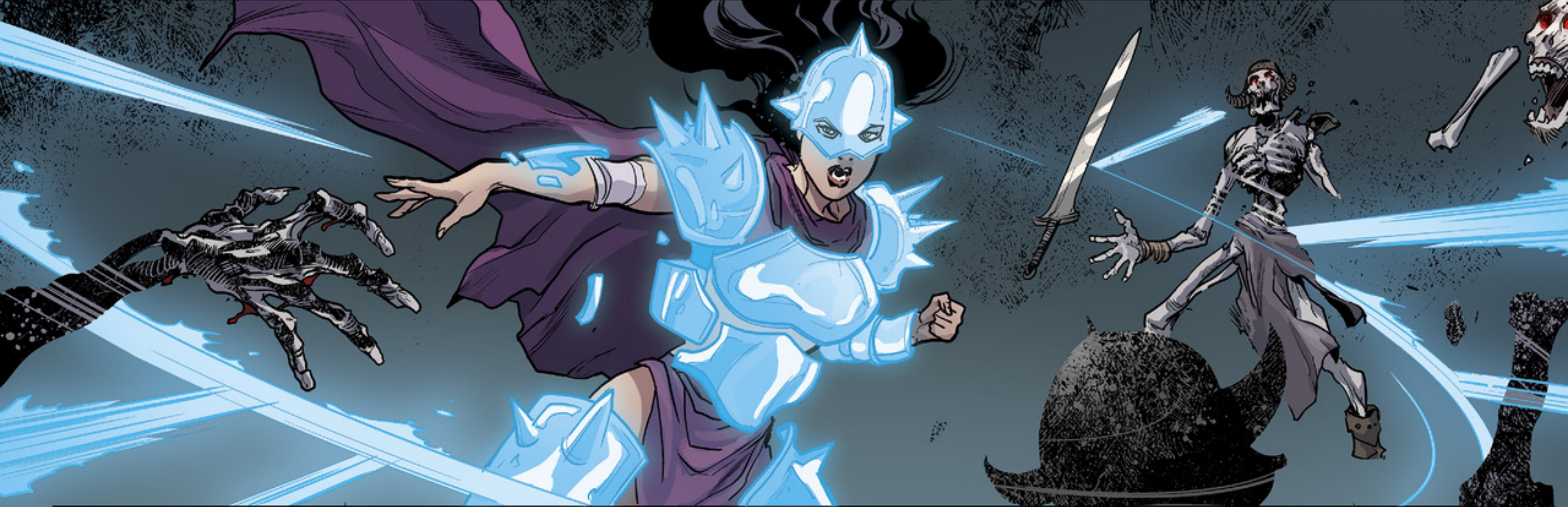
LOOK
AT MY
FACE.



GODS...

YOU DON'T HAVE
THE STOMACH FOR
THIS. I CAN FEEL YOUR
KNEES BUCKLING.

JUST LET ME
TAKE OVER. YOU
CAN HIDE INSIDE
THE RAGE.



MEET MY
BLOOD
SOLDIERS.

USED TO
BE MINE.

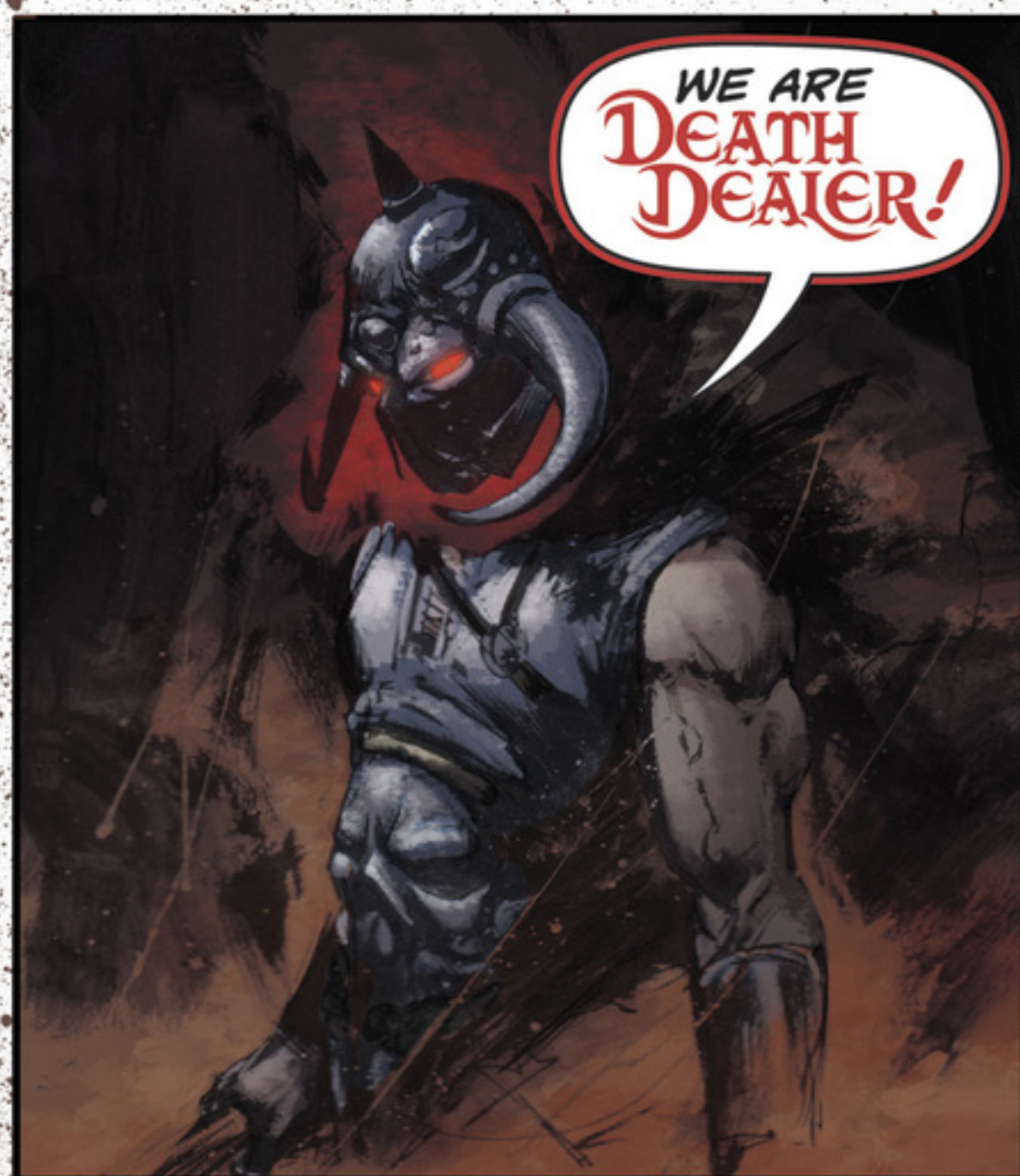


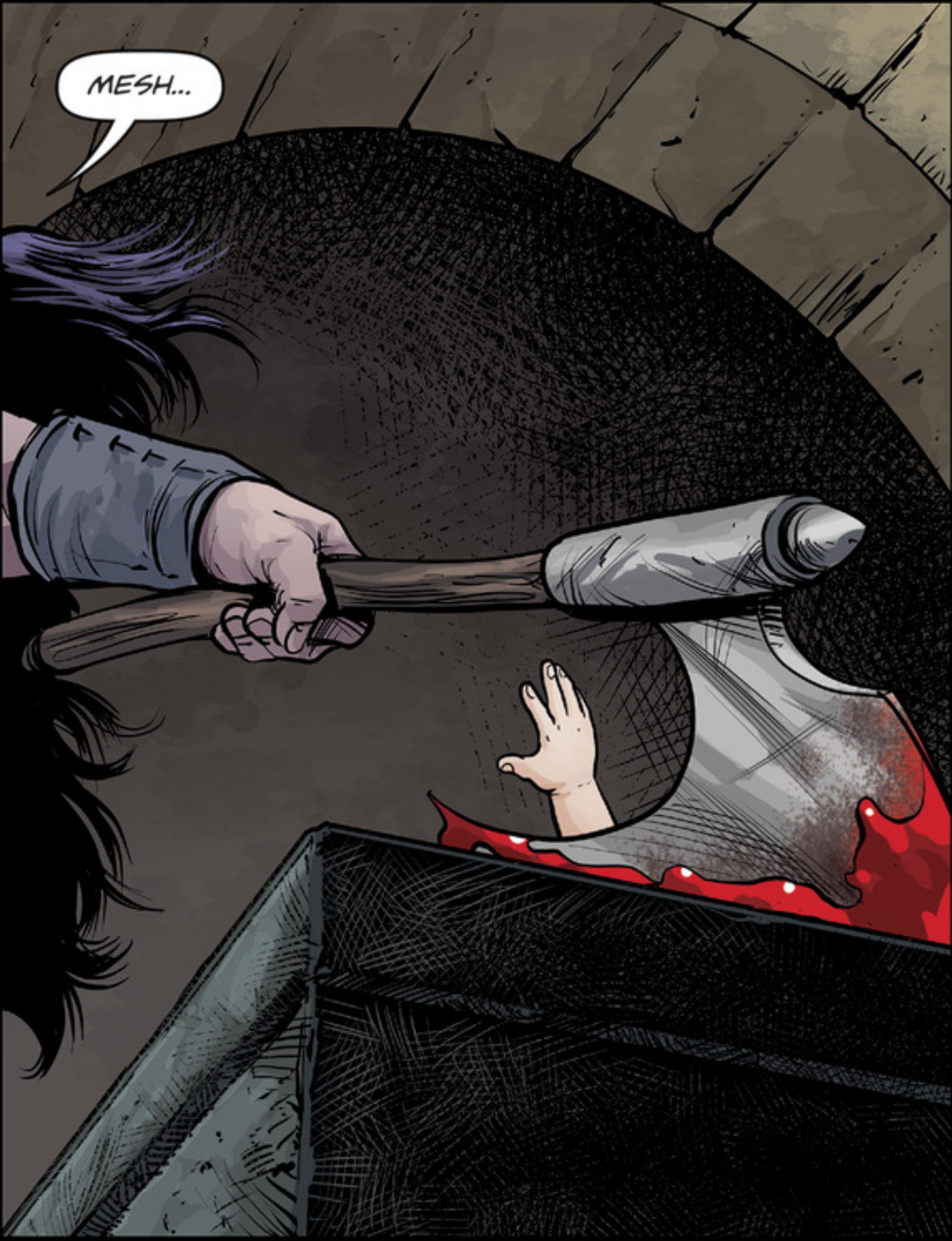
THIS IS BULLSHIT. I WANNA KILL SOME PEOPLE.

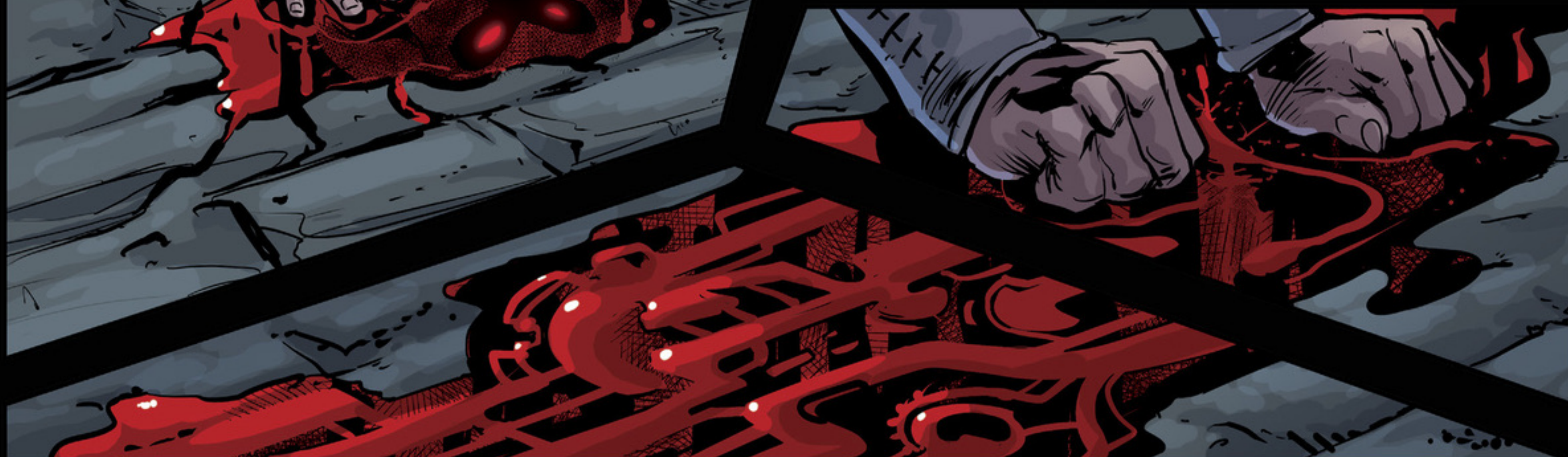
GET THE BOY! SAVE MESH!













THANK YOU FOR YOUR LIFE. YOUR ESSENCE WILL BE FUSED WITH HIS SOUL. WE WILL USE THE ENERGY YOU GIVE WITH DISHONOR.

ADMIRA... THE BOY... I'M--

YOU...YOU WANTED THIS?

YOU DID AS WE HAD HOPED. THE DEATH DEALER SLAYED AN INNOCENT BEING ON THE PORTAL'S ALTAR.

I'M THE ONE WHO PLANNED IT.

OH NO, WOLVES-- WON'T SOMEBODY PLEASE RESCUE ME.



HA HA HA HA!



I GUESS I'M NOT REALLY THE MOST EVIL THING IN THE UNIVERSE.

A SOUL FOR A SOUL. OUR DARK COMMANDER FREED FROM THE BOWELS OF HELL.

THE CHILD'S SOUL. I SENT IT TO HELL?

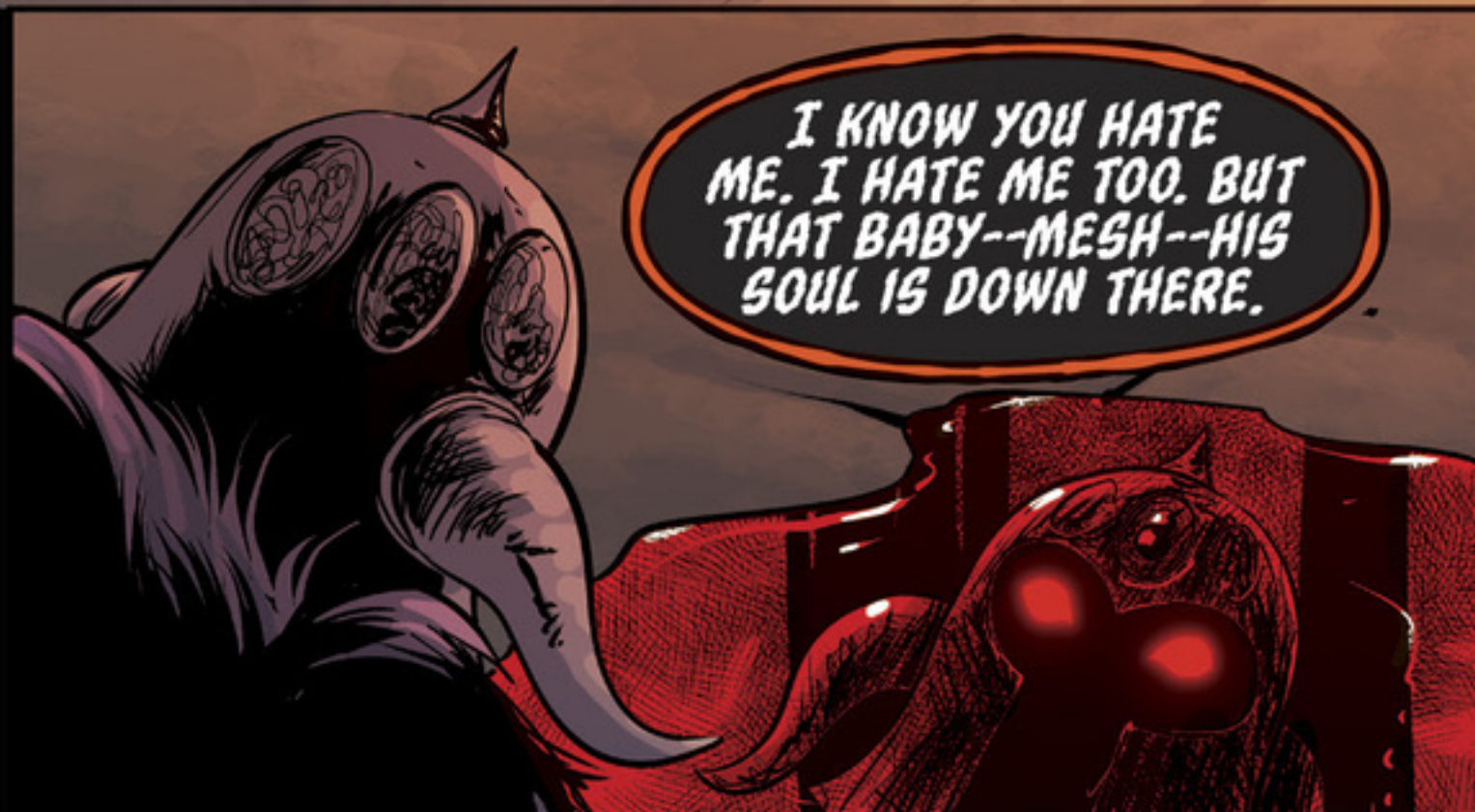
YES.

NO. I DID.





KUR. WE
NEED TO
LEAVE.
WE LOST.
BUT THERE'S
STILL A CHANCE
WE CAN WIN
THE WAR.



I KNOW YOU HATE
ME. I HATE ME TOO. BUT
THAT BABY--MESH--HIS
SOUL IS DOWN THERE.



YOU
HAVE TO GIVE
ME A CHANCE.
I SWEAR.



THIS IS
THE END,
BROTHER.

SORCERESS--



RUN!

NO!

END OF
BOOK ONE

NEXT ISSUE



DEALER'S CHOICE

So how was that ending for our first arc?

First, I'd like to thank Stefano Martino for launching this series with beautiful pages worthy of the paintings that inspired them.

But we must bid Stefano a fond farewell, as he rides into the sunset. Right in the middle of drawing this very issue, his son Leonardo was born. Stefano will now take some time to spend with his family.

To help with finishing the issue, another Leonardo came riding to our rescue:



Leo Manco. His detailed pencils and moody inks give the flashback sequence and berserker rage double page spread their own distinctive look while still working with the narrative.

I'm sure you'll let us know how well we pulled it off, as evidenced by some of the letters we've received. Here's a few now:

First of all, I love this new comic book version of Frank Frazetta's Death Dealer. Continuing his fantasy art of the Dark One of the Grillards, but this Death Dealer is a different version. First, his name: Kur, not Gath of Baal. Second, his helmet version seems different from the novel, which blasts hellfire from the eye slits. I've read three issues so far and haven't seen the helmet use this dark power.

Who is this version of the Death Dealer, why the name change and changes to the helmet?

-T.T.

We are thrilled to have a longtime fan like yourself along for this latest adventure, T.T.! We also wanted to be sure that a new generation of fans could jump right in, so we have a completely new version of the character, separate from both the novels and previous comics. Happy to hear it's been working for you so far!

On the other hand, we have prolific letter writer Jon Weber of Voorhees, New Jersey, who has shared his many thoughts and recommendations over the past few months. (And much praise, to be sure.) Here are a smattering of those:

The first thing I have to ask is: Was this first story arc supposed to be five issues instead of four? If you guys decided to compress the story to move it along, bravo! I have become exhausted by dragged-out dramas and "event" storylines that crawl along to fill up pages for the trade paperback editions that'll be published in six months.

However, this issue [#3] felt weighed down by a ton of information thrown at the reader all at once. A dreaming god? A fire kingdom? A frozen kingdom? Eight lords of Hell? Dak? What?! Stefano Martino's trippy art—loved the full page of mystic crabs—couldn't cover up the confusing "explanation" of what's led our players to this point.

That said, writer Mitch Iverson is finding his footing, and there are many bright spots to build from.

Thanks for writing in each issue, Jon. Our aim is to make sure they are satisfying reads on their own, thus the higher page count. This also shortens the story arcs, giving you five typical issues of story in only four comic books. And we planned the one-shot stories using other creative teams to help keep the main team intact while sticking to a monthly publishing schedule.

#3 was a breather from the breakneck action of our first two installments, so it was a good place to lay out a bit of the world via the Sorceress and build on her relationships with Kur and Death Dealer. And we managed to sneak in a deadly duel with a wizard to boot!

Hopefully, it set up this issue's finale for maximum impact.

As for the next issue, we have a special story featuring the debut of the Sea Witch! Written by Torunn Grønbeek and art by Diego Galindo, #5 will be in stores in a few short weeks!

Until then, may the Dealer be kind to you!

Denton J. Tipton
Executive Editor

Please send your thoughts and curses to **DEALER'S CHOICE** at letters@incendium.co.

Mark **OKAY TO PRINT** if you're bold enough to have them printed here. Fan art will also be considered.

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MARCO TURINI

COVER B
FRANK FRAZETTA

COVER C
VIDEO GAME HOMAGE BY
DIEGO GALINDO

DESIGNED BY JACOB BASCLE

COVERS D & E
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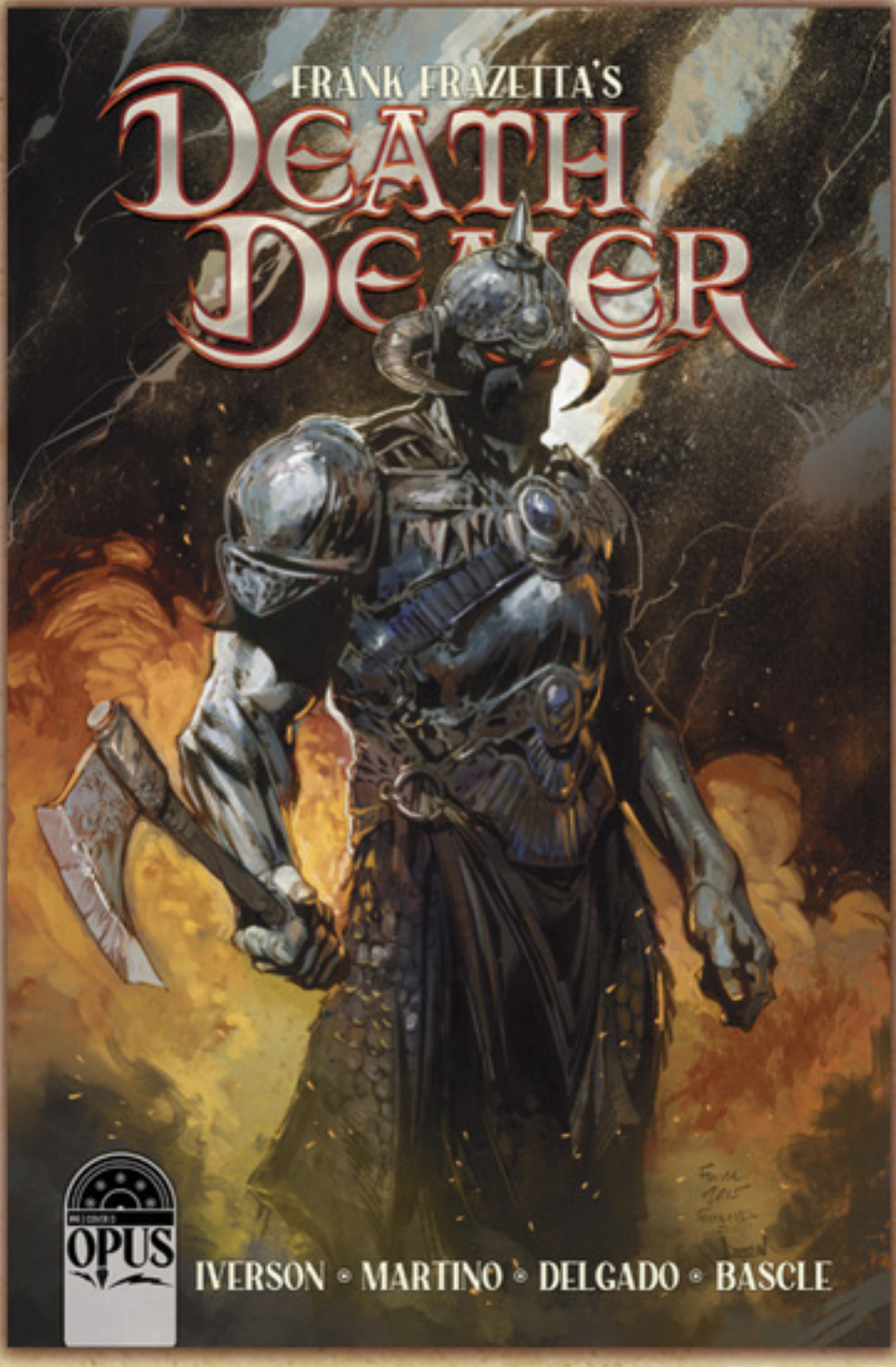
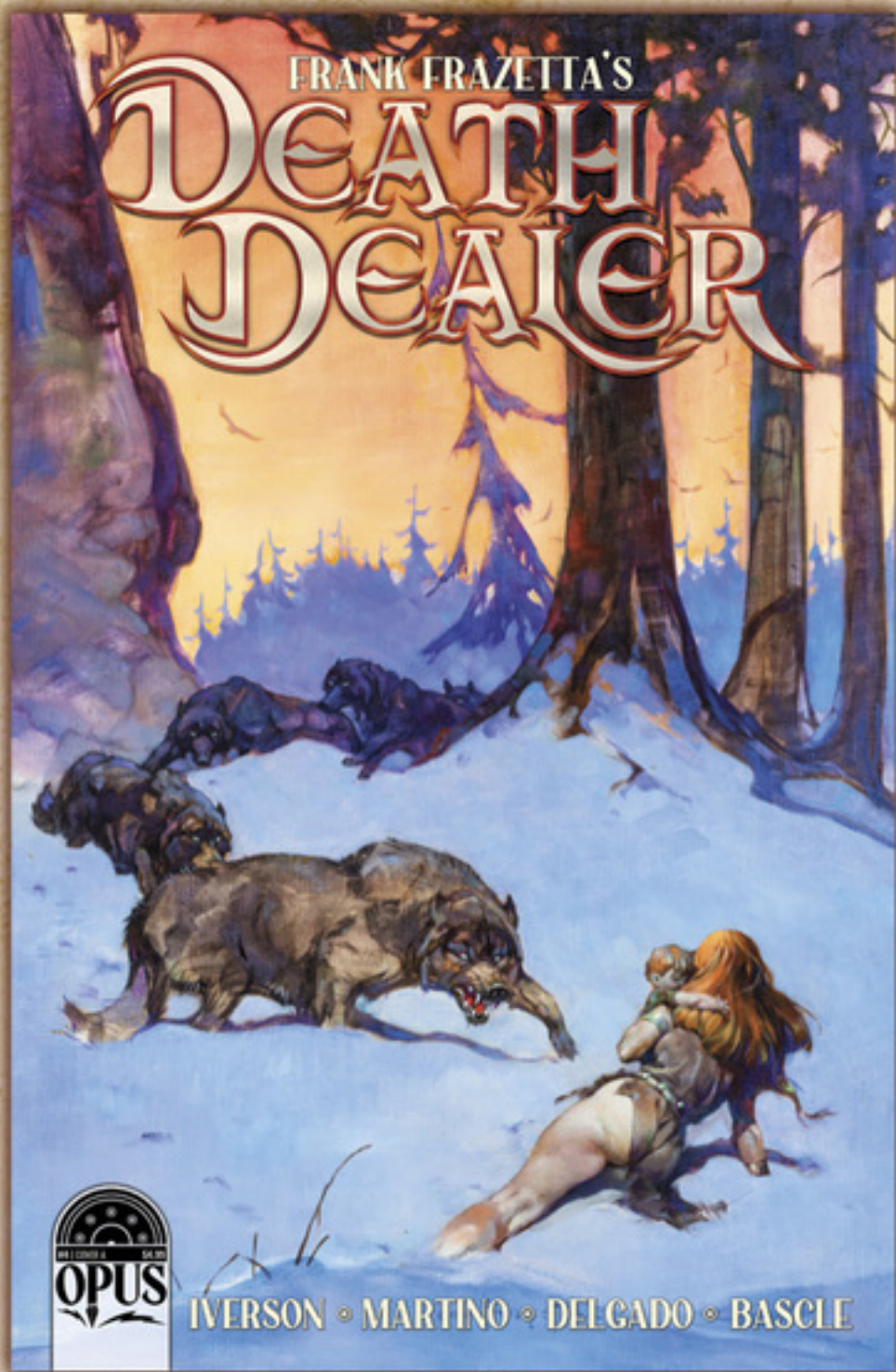


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